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U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

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## **EEOC Public Portal User's Guide**

### **Vol 2 – Submit an Online Inquiry to the EEOC**

March 19, 2020

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## Introduction to the EEOC Public Portal

The EEOC Public Portal is a secure, web-based application developed for individuals to interact with the EEOC regarding a complaint of employment discrimination. Using the EEOC Public Portal, you may file a complaint against an employer in the Private Sector (i.e. Business or non-profit) or a State or Local Government Agency. If you work or worked for the U.S. Federal Government as an employee or a contractor, or applied to work for the Federal Government, you may request a hearing with or appeal a decision to the EEOC regarding your formal EEO complaint. The EEOC Public Portal is the primary point of communication between you and the EEOC.

## About the User's Guide

The EEOC Public Portal User's Guide ("User's Guide") provides comprehensive guidance for using the EEOC Public Portal's features and functions. The User's Guide is published as individual documents, each of which covers a feature or related features of the EEOC Public Portal.

The following EEOC Public Portal User's Guide documents are available; the highlighted Document Name is the one you're reading now:

- ❖ Vol 1 – Getting Started (learn about EEOC Public Portal access, structure, and other basic information)
- ❖ Vol 2 – Submit an Online Inquiry to the EEOC
- ❖ Vol 3 – Post-Inquiry Tasks (learn about scheduling an interview with the EEOC, entering additional information about an online inquiry, and signing a Charge of Discrimination)
- ❖ Vol 4 – Post-Charge Tasks (learn how to check the status of your charge, respond to an Invitation to Mediate, and request/respond to a Respondent's Position Statement)
- ❖ Vol 5 – Charge Closure (learn what happens when your charge has been closed)
- ❖ Vol 6 – Hearings with the EEOC
- ❖ Vol 7 – Appealing Federal Agency Decisions to the EEOC
- ❖ Vol 8 – Manage Case/Charge Information (learn how to display information about your case, enter/update your personal information, add representatives, and submit/receive documents associated with your case)

## Chapter 1 Submitting an Online Inquiry

The first step in the online process of filing a charge with the EEOC is to submit an inquiry. This will provide the EEOC with basic information to evaluate your complaint and to determine if the agency can help you.

- **Tip!** If you believe that a Federal Agency has discriminated against you, and wish to file a formal complaint, you must file it with the agency's EEO office.

To submit an inquiry online perform the following steps:

**Step 1.** On the Home Page, click on **Filing with EEOC** on the left-hand side to begin the process.



- **Tip!** Turn off Pop-Up blockers in your browser.
- **Tip!** Do not use the browser buttons to navigate the application. Use the **Back** and **Next** buttons.

**Step 2.** When asked to identify the **Type of Employer** you believe discriminated against you, select the employer from the available choices and click on the **Next** button.

**Step 3.** An informational page displays; when you are ready, click on **Next** to continue.

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File a Complaint

Assessment Inquiry Schedule Interview More Details File Charge

EEOC enforces Federal civil rights laws that protect you from workplace discrimination and retaliation because of your race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetic information. You may also have rights under other federal, state or local laws. You will be asked five general questions to determine if EEOC can help you. Your answers will not be saved unless you submit an inquiry to EEOC, which you can do after answering these questions. Submitting an inquiry will allow EEOC to evaluate your information and advise you on what we can do to assist you, to include assisting you with filing a charge of discrimination, if appropriate.

**SUBMITTING AN INQUIRY IS DIFFERENT FROM FILING A CHARGE OF DISCRIMINATION.**

A charge of discrimination is a signed statement asserting that an organization engaged in employment discrimination. It requests EEOC to take remedial action. The laws enforced by EEOC, except for the Equal Pay Act, require you to file a charge before you can file a lawsuit for discrimination. There are strict [time limits for filing a charge](#).

Back Next

**Step 4.** A page displays with links to a video in English or Spanish that explains the basics of filing a charge with the EEOC. Click on the Play button (▶) to view the video to learn more before getting started. There are also links provided at the bottom of the page to help you learn more about the EEOC and its processes.

Click on the **Next** button when you are ready to start.

**Step 5.** You will now be asked four general questions about the nature of your complaint, to determine if the EEOC can help you. Your answers will be saved only if you submit an inquiry. Click on the **Next** button after answering each question.

The assessment may end early if it detects an answer indicating the EEOC may not be able to help you. In that event, you will see a reason why the assessment ended and a list of additional resources will be provided that you can contact.

**Timeliness.** Enter the date you believe the discrimination occurred<sup>1</sup>.

**Reason.** Select the Reason why you believe you were discriminated against. Check all reasons that apply to your complaint.

<sup>1</sup> The date you provide helps EEOC determine how much time you have to file. In most states, you have 300 days from the date the discrimination took place to file a charge, but in some states you have only 180 days to file with the EEOC.

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Sign In | Register

File a Complaint

Assessment | Inquiry | Schedule Interview | More Details | File Charge

Progress... 42%

**Reason**

I believe I was discriminated against because (check at least one, or as many as apply; for more information about each choice, click the "i" icon)

- ☐ Age - I am 40 years of age or older *i*
- ☐ Color *i*
- ☒ Disability *i*
- ☐ Genetic information, my family medical history, or my participation in genetic services like counseling, education, or testing *i*
- ☐ National origin, and/or ethnicity *i*
- ☐ Race *i*
- ☐ Religion *i*
- ☐ Sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity) *i*
- ☐ Retaliation - I filed a charge of job discrimination about any of the above *i*
- ☐ Retaliation - I contacted a government agency to complain about job discrimination *i*
- ☐ Retaliation - I complained to my employer about job discrimination *i*
- ☐ Retaliation - I helped or was a witness in someone else's complaint about job discrimination *i*
- ☐ Something Else


**Next** **Back**

➤ **Tip!** Select an "i" icon (*i*) to learn more about an available reason.

Depending on the reason(s) you selected, you may be asked for additional information to aid the EEOC in determining if it can help you.

**Number of Employees.** Depending on your previous answers, you may be asked to select the approximate number of employees who work for the employer that you believe discriminated against you. Select from the available choices.

**Location.** Choose the state where you believe the discrimination occurred from the list provided.

**Step 6.** After you complete the questions, review your answers on the summary page that appears. To change any answer, click on the **Edit** icon next to that answer (). If you are satisfied with your answers, click on the **Next** button to continue.

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File a Complaint

Assessment Inquiry Schedule Interview More Details File Charge

Progress... 78%

### Summary of your responses

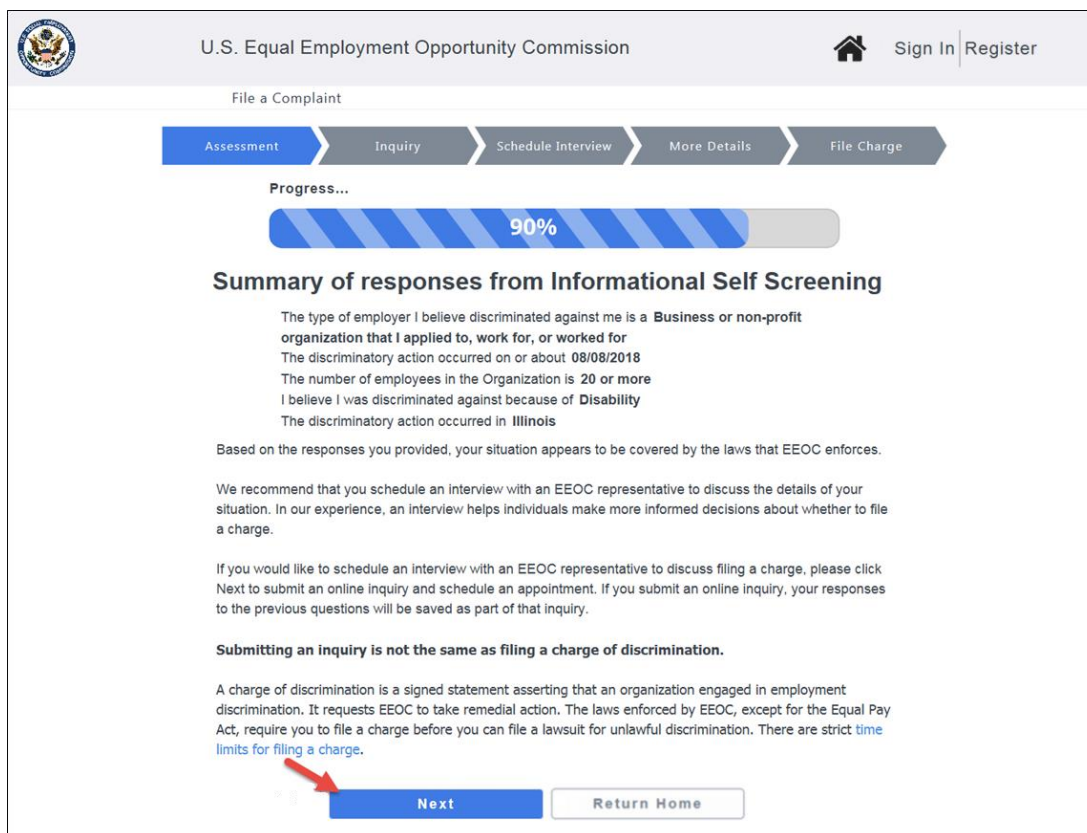
To change a response click the "edit" icon to the right of your response.

- The type of employer I believe discriminated against me is a  
**Business or non-profit organization that I applied to, work for, or worked for**
- The discriminatory action occurred on or about  
**08/08/2018**
- The number of employees in the Organization is  
**20 or more**
- I believe I was discriminated against because of  
**Disability**
- The discriminatory action occurred in  
**Illinois**

**Next**

**Step 7.** The next page will let you know if you may continue the online inquiry process. Anti-discrimination laws give you a limited amount of time to file a charge of discrimination (typically 180 or 300 days from the date the discrimination occurred, depending on the law and state in which the discrimination occurred), and your answers help to determine if you have enough time left to file. If your time to file has not run out, you will be able to click on the **Next** button to continue.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> If your time has run out, you may still file a charge with EEOC in person, although EEOC may not be able to assist you and will be required by law to notify your employer that the charge was filed.



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Sign In | Register

File a Complaint

Assessment Inquiry Schedule Interview More Details File Charge

Progress... 90%

### Summary of responses from Informational Self Screening

The type of employer I believe discriminated against me is a **Business or non-profit organization that I applied to, work for, or worked for**  
 The discriminatory action occurred on or about **08/08/2018**  
 The number of employees in the Organization is **20 or more**  
 I believe I was discriminated against because of **Disability**  
 The discriminatory action occurred in **Illinois**

Based on the responses you provided, your situation appears to be covered by the laws that EEOC enforces.

We recommend that you schedule an interview with an EEOC representative to discuss the details of your situation. In our experience, an interview helps individuals make more informed decisions about whether to file a charge.

If you would like to schedule an interview with an EEOC representative to discuss filing a charge, please click Next to submit an online inquiry and schedule an appointment. If you submit an online inquiry, your responses to the previous questions will be saved as part of that inquiry.

**Submitting an inquiry is not the same as filing a charge of discrimination.**

A charge of discrimination is a signed statement asserting that an organization engaged in employment discrimination. It requests EEOC to take remedial action. The laws enforced by EEOC, except for the Equal Pay Act, require you to file a charge before you can file a lawsuit for unlawful discrimination. There are strict [time limits for filing a charge](#).

[Next](#) [Return Home](#)

**Step 8.** To submit an online inquiry, you must set up a user account. A login page displays to enable you to login/register to submit an online inquiry. If you have not used the EEOC Public Portal before, click on the **Register** link (see *EEOC Public Portal User's Guide Vol 1 – Getting Started* for details on creating a user account).

➤ **Tip!** If you already registered with the EEOC, enter your user ID and password in the fields provided.

**Step 9.** Once you are logged in, you will see a status page that shows which parts of the inquiry process you have completed. Click on the **Continue** button to proceed to part 2 – Online Inquiry.



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Welcome, [Joan](#) | [Log Out](#)

File a Complaint

Assessment Inquiry Schedule Interview More Details File Charge

1 File a Complaint

2 Online Inquiry

3 Schedule an Interview

4 Supplemental Information

We have a few more questions to ask you that will help us understand your situation. Please answer each question. **The information you enter is confidential and will not be sent to your employer at this time.** Your responses create an "inquiry" in EEOC's system and you will receive an inquiry number after you click submit.

Then you will be asked to schedule an interview with an EEOC representative.

**PROVIDING THIS INFORMATION IS NOT THE SAME AS FILING A CHARGE OF DISCRIMINATION**

A charge of discrimination is a signed statement asserting that an organization engaged in employment discrimination. It requests EEOC to take remedial action. The laws enforced by EEOC, except for the Equal Pay Act, require you to [file a charge](#) before you can file a lawsuit for discrimination. There are strict [time limits for filing a charge](#).

[Continue](#)

**Step 10.** Your personal information is displayed, which will be submitted with the online inquiry. This screen is view-only. Click on the **Next** button to proceed.

- **Tip!** If you need to modify this information, click on the link at the top of the page to go to your *User Account Information*. When you have finished and submitted your changes, you will be returned to inquiry submission process.

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Welcome, [Joan](#) | [Log Out](#)

Filing with EEOC

Assessment Inquiry Schedule Interview More Details File Charge

Progress... 17%

### Information about you

This information is from your EEOC Public Portal Account and will be added to your case when you submit it. If you need to modify this information, please return to your Account Information to do so.

Prefix: Ms.

First Name\*: Joan

Middle Initial:

Last Name\*: Worker

Suffix:

Address 1\*: 150 Main Street

Address 2:

Country\*: United States of America

Zip Code\*: 60601

City\*:

CHICAGO

State: Illinois

(Use your personal email, not your work email)

Email: jtworker@mailinator.com

(At least one phone number must be entered\*)

Home Phone: (555) 413-1235

Work Phone: e.g., 1234567890

Cell Phone: e.g., 1234567890

Back Next

**Step 11.** After confirming the information about yourself, you will be asked to provide additional details about your situation to complete the inquiry. Click on the **Next** button after answering each question.

➤ **Tip!** You must provide information wherever you see a red asterisk (\*) to continue.

**Adverse Action.** Briefly describe the action taken against you that you believe is discriminatory.

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Filing with EEOC

Assessment Inquiry Schedule Interview More Details File Charge

Progress... 33%

### Adverse Action(s)

Briefly describe what action was taken against you that you believe was discriminatory. Identify the type of action and the date(s) the action occurred.

I am hearing-impaired and was denied a promotion that involved interacting more with customers. A less experienced co-worker (with no hearing problems) was given the position.

Back Next

**Respondent/Employer Information.** Provide the contact information for the employer you believe discriminated against you (the “respondent”).

First, search the Employer Master List for your employer. You may enter the name and/or street address and/or zip code of your employer. When you have entered the search criteria, click on the **Search** button.

➤ **Tip!** Entering a zip code will automatically populate the city and state fields.

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Filing with EEOC

Assessment Inquiry Schedule Interview More Details File Charge

Progress... 50%

### Respondent/Employer Information

Who do you believe Discriminated against you?

Please enter your employer name and/or street address and/or zip code, then click the Search button below to find matching employers. Use the Select button to select your employer. If the desired employer does not appear in search results, manually enter your employer information and click the Next button.

Name of Organization: **Big Business**

Address 1:

Address 2:

Zip code:

City:

County:

State:

Phone Number: e.g., 1234567890

HR Director Or Owner:

Email Address:

[Search](#) [Clear](#)

Were you employed by this organization at an address that is different from the one you provided above?\*

☐ Yes ☐ No

[Back](#) [Next](#)

A list of matching employers displays. Click on the **Select** button next to your employer to select it. If your employer is not found, manually enter the employer information in the fields provided.

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Welcome, [Joan](#) | [Log Out](#)

Filing with EEOC

Assessment Inquiry Schedule Interview More Details File Charge

Progress... 50%

### Respondent/Employer Information

Who do you believe Discriminated against you?

Please enter your employer name and/or street address and/or zip code, then click the Search button below to find matching employers. Use the Select button to select your employer. If the desired employer does not appear in search results, manually enter your employer information and click the Next button.

Name of Organization: **Big Business**

Address 1:

Address 2:

Zip code:

City:

County:

State:

Phone Number: e.g., 1234567890

HR Director Or Owner:

Email Address:

[Search](#) [Clear](#)

We have found employer(s) matching the information you provided. You can either select one of the matched employers below or try search again by modifying the information above. If none of the found employers is the one you wanted, please enter all information manually and click the Next button.

Employer Name	Address	City/State/Zip	Phone/Fax	Select
BIG BUSINESS	110 MAIN STREET	CHICAGO IL 60601	bbs@gmailinator.com (555) 413-7890	<a href="#">Select</a>
BIG IT LLC	1590 ISLAND LN STE 26	ORANGE PARK 32003		<a href="#">Select</a>
BIG SKY BUSINESS SOLUTIONS LLC	6777 ISLAND DR	GRAND PRAIRIE 75054	(817) 518-6405	<a href="#">Select</a>
BIG BUSINESS AND ENTERTAINMENT INC	10900 STONELAKE BLVD STE	AUSTIN 78759		<a href="#">Select</a>
BIG BIG INVESTMENTS LTD	4225 EDMONDSON AVE	DALLAS 75205		<a href="#">Select</a>
BIG BUSINESS INVESTMENTS LTD	5757 WARREN PKWY STE 210	FIRSCO 75034		<a href="#">Select</a>
BIG BUSINESS PRINTING SERVICES	13342 HIGHWAY 10	LLK RIVLR 55230		<a href="#">Select</a>

Were you employed by this organization at an address that is different from the one you provided above?\*

☐ Yes ☐ No

[Back](#) [Next](#)

If you work or worked at a location other than the employer's primary address when the discrimination occurred, be sure to answer "Yes" to the last question on this page

- **Tip!** If you select **Yes** to the question "Were you employed by this organization at an address that is different from the one you provided above?" the screen will change to provide fields to enter your work location.

**Previous Filing Information.** Indicate whether you have previously filed a complaint about this matter, either with the EEOC or another agency.

- **Tip!** If you select **Yes** to the question "Have you already filed a charge with the EEOC about this matter?" the screen will change to provide fields to enter the date you filed (required) and the charge number.
- **Tip!** If you select **Yes** to the question "Have you filed a complaint with another agency about this matter?" the screen will change to provide fields to enter the agency name, date you filed, and what the complaint was about (all three are required).

**Demographics.** Finally, you will be asked some general demographic questions (age, disability, ethnic background, gender, etc.). This information is important to the EEOC for research purposes that help them better serve the public. It is voluntary and the EEOC will not reveal your answers.

**Step 12.** Click on the **Submit** button to submit the inquiry. The EEOC will evaluate your information and advise you on what they can do to assist you.

**Step 13.** When the inquiry is successfully submitted, you will see a page confirming your submission with an inquiry number as shown below. (Note: the inquiry number displayed is for a fictional case.)

The screenshot shows the EEOC Public Portal interface. At the top, the header includes the EEOC logo, the text "U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission", a home icon, and a user greeting "Welcome, Joan | Log Out". Below the header, a progress bar indicates the steps: Assessment, Inquiry, Schedule Interview, More Details, and File Charge. A message states: "You have completed two of four required parts needed to officially file a charge of discrimination." Below this, four numbered steps are shown: 1. File a Complaint (completed with a green checkmark), 2. Online Inquiry (completed with a green checkmark), 3. Schedule an Interview, and 4. Supplemental Information. The main section is titled "Inquiry Submitted" and contains the text: "Your inquiry has been successfully submitted to EEOC. You should write down the following inquiry number **440-2018-00199** and refer to it when contacting the EEOC." Below this is a section titled "Online Scheduling" with the text: "You are now ready to schedule an interview with an EEOC representative, and will be directed to the scheduling calendar of the appropriate office when you click 'Schedule an Interview' below. You must schedule an interview, we will not take any action on your inquiry. Based on the information you provided, you can schedule an interview at the following office(s):" followed by a dropdown menu. At the bottom, there are two buttons: "My Cases" and "Schedule an Interview".

Be sure to write the inquiry number down so you can refer to it later.

## **Chapter 2     Additional Steps**

After you submit your online inquiry, you must schedule an interview to discuss your inquiry with an EEOC representative. You should also provide additional information about your complaint prior to the interview (*see EEOC Public Portal User's Guide Vol 3 – Post-Inquiry Tasks for details*).